Look At Me When You're Alone

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Look At Me When You're Alone

by sourweather

Summary

After a traumatic run-in with a killer, Will goes to Hannibal for care and comfort.

Notes

Thanks so much to madeofbees for the SUPER fun prompt, it was really weird returning to this series two years later, but i loved being able to spend time in this universe again!!!

See the end of the work for more notes

"You okay?"

Will looks up, squinting into the light. Jack blocks the fluorescent bulbs overhead, looming, his expression lost in the cacophony of Will's senses.

There's chatter everywhere. Twenty minutes ago this was a shady little gas station on the outskirts of Baltimore, populated by a handful of people buying energy drinks and gum and one chronically exhausted nineteen-year-old behind the counter. Now it's a crime scene, with all the chaos that entails.

Will is currently sitting on a grubby tile floor, his shirt ruined and hanging open as an EMT pokes and prods at a gash in his side. The cut is shallow, she said, it looks worse than it is. It looks pretty bad, he'd told her. Well, it's not good.

There's a corpse, two aisles over. Lying in a pool of blood between rows of cheese puffs and pretzels. Will can't see it from where he is, but he knows it's there. His eyes gravitate toward the merchandise separating them, like a child who can't stop staring at their closet door because there's a monster behind it.

The murderer has already been detained. They're questioning everyone inside. Now Jack is trying to question Will.

"Hey, I said are you alright?"

"...Yeah," he breathes. He swallows, shakes his head, tries to find his center. The pain still hasn't hit him. He takes a sharp breath, smells blood. "Uh, yeah, I'm fine. It's just a knick, really."

"He's going to need stitches," the EMT corrects, taping a thick bandage to his side. She looks up at Will, her hands kind but clinical. "But yes, in the grand scheme of things, you're fine."

"God, Will, what happened?" Jack shakes his head, looking around the gas station like there might be answers among the one-dollar lottery tickets. "I thought this guy was trying to flee the country, not go on a killing spree at the damn Circle K."

Will shrugs. "I know as much as you do. People tend to panic when the FBI is on their tails, it's not that surprising. I'm guessing that he knew his time was up and just decided to go down fighting."

Jack seems to deflate at that. It's cut and dry, they've got the culprit in custody, but it doesn't satisfy him. No, Jack only ever finds satisfaction in the chase. On to the next one, that's what he's thinking right now. Will can see it all over his face. One down, a lifetime's worth to go. Will feels exhausted just looking at him. Or maybe that's the adrenaline crash.

The buzzing of his phone interrupts whatever response Jack might have been cooking, and he grunts painfully as he fishes the device from his pocket. He presses one hand to the bandage, holding the phone in the other.

Calling: Han

"Who is it?" Jack asks.

Will licks his lips. "It's Doctor Lecter." No first-name basis while he's working. Looks a bit too friendly. "Give me a sec."

"Of course."

Will makes himself some version of comfortable, watching as the agents and EMTs swarm about. "What's up, Doc?" he asks when he accepts the call. Hannibal doesn't laugh.

"Hello, darling."

He eyes Jack, still standing beside him. Jack glances at him, and Will pointedly lifts his brows. He looks irritated, but he leaves to go terrorize the poor cashier regardless.

As soon as Jack is out of earshot, Will adjusts his tone. Lets his voice dip low, sweetens it. "I'm not in trouble, am I?" he tries. It leaves more strained than he'd like, there's no way Hannibal doesn't catch it.

"Are you alright?"

"Agent Graham? We're gonna bring you to the ER, okay?"

Will grimaces, pulling the phone away from his face. "Just a sec," he repeats. She looks ready to smack him.

Hannibal is already speaking when the phone returns to his ear. "Who was that? Did she say you were going to the ER?"

He blows out a breath through his teeth. "Don't worry," he starts, because he knows how Hannibal is when it comes to Will. "But I got a little... roughed up at work."

" 'Roughed up'?" Hannibal echoes.

"It's fine, really. It's − they said it looks worse than it is."

There was never a chance in Hell of that working on him. "Where are you? I'm on my way."

He sighs sharply, lowering his voice and hissing in his boyfriend's ear. "No, Han, it's fine. I'm *fine.* I just need some stitches, it's not a big deal."

"I can give you stitches," Hannibal counters, and Will rolls his eyes.

"I'm sure you can, but − "

"You said yourself that it isn't urgent. I'm a trained surgeon, Will. Let me bring you home, you'll be much more comfortable there than you would be sitting in an emergency room."

"Han..." but he has trouble objecting. Spending the day being pampered and fussed over by Hannibal does sound nice. He's been burning the candle at both ends, lately, it's been weeks since he's indulged Hannibal's obsession with caring for him.

Shaking his head in defeat, he sends Hannibal his location.

"I'll be there in five minutes, darling," he promises.

He chuckles incredulously. "It's a ten minute drive."

"Five," Hannibal insists again, and Will can't help but smile as the the line goes dead.

He waves the EMTs off. "I'm good," he says. "Thanks."

The woman who'd cleaned and bandaged his wound balks at him. "Agent Graham, you need medical attention."

"I know that." Will can feel Jack's attention like a heavy hand on his shoulder, and he resists the impulse to shrug it away. "But I have a personal doctor, he's very particular about my treatment. I'll be stitched up and resting in under an hour, scout's honor."

She looks past him, upward, as if seeking divine assistance. God doesn't answer, but Jack Crawford is more proficient at getting shit done, from Will's point of view. "He's obviously in shock," she says. "Can I get a little help here?"

"I'm fine, really," he insists before Jack can reply. "Just giving the good doctor some sewing practice." Will shrugs, looking up at Jack with a wry smirk. "It's not my first time getting a paper cut at the office, Jack. I'm not worried."

Jack narrows his eyes. He gives a perfunctory nod to the EMT, and she huffs and mutters some choice words but she ultimately gives them space. Will almost wishes she'd stayed in their orbit when the laser of Jack's scrutiny chooses him as its next target.

" 'Personal doctor,' hm?"

Will sighs. "He offered to look at it for me. Avoid all the stress of the ER, for free."

Jack arches a brow. "Worried your insurance isn't gonna cover it?" he deadpans, and Will rolls his eyes.

"If you've got something you want to say, then by all means, say it."

To his surprise, Jack actually hesitates. Some of his severity dissipates, just for a moment. He crouches beside Will, meeting him eye-to-eye. "Alright," he says, and he looks around to ensure they aren't being observed. "I think that Doctor Lecter is taking a more active role in your life, and I think that it's inappropriate. That's what I have to say."

A flare of anger shoots up from Will's stomach, so strong and sudden that his throat burns with smoke. "Do you?"

Will can see a flash of regret in his face. He's thinking that this was a mistake. The wrong words at the wrong time. He's right, but it's a little late for second guessing. "He told me that he was increasing the length of your sessions, a couple months back, but I didn't think it would escalate like this. I'm not stupid, Will, I've noticed how involved he's become. And now he's telling you not to go to a hospital?"

"Thought you trusted his expertise," Will grunts, wincing at he presses a hand to the bandage.

"People are talking," Jack adds, and Will can tell that he's not going to let this go until he's wrestled it to the ground. "I'm hearing that he's driving you to work in the mornings."

Only when the two of them slept together the night before. "Don't tell me you're scared of a little workplace gossip."

"It's not the gossip I'm worried about!" Jack hisses. He takes a heavy breath, leaning closer. "I *saw* what you were like, the night we went after the Jeweler. You weren't yourself, Will. And he was hellbent on keeping you there − I had to threaten him just to be allowed to *talk* to you."

Will frowns to himself. Hannibal hadn't mentioned that part. Of course he remembers that night, but Jack has been kind enough not to bring it up until now.

"Listen, I won't claim to know what's going on in that head of yours, but to an outside observer? You seem *better,* lately. Stable. Are you sure that all of this is necessary?"

It sticks to the back of his throat, refusing to be swallowed. "So you can tell that Hannibal's influence is making me happier, and you think my response to that should be to... stop spending time with him?"

Jack shows his palms in a display of uncertainty. "I just don't want this to turn into a dependence."

Will hears the thud of a car door slamming shut outside. "Right, God forbid I feel like I don't have to do this shit on my own." He's shaky as he makes his way to his feet, but he tries to keep the pain out of his expression.

"Will."

He stumbles slightly, but he doesn't stop. Hannibal is in the parking lot, standing beside his car. He's scanning the area, seeking a glimpse of him. Will manages a tight smile.

"Come on, Will, you know that's not what I meant."

The air outside is warm, clear. The parking lot is still crowded with noise, and the afternoon sun is oppressively bright, but his next breath doesn't smell so overwhelmingly of blood. Hannibal's face seems to flood with relief as soon as he sees Will approaching. Jack follows him out. Will ignores him.

Hannibal's gaze locks immediately onto the bandage near his ribs, the still-wet bloodstain on his ruined shirt. Well, the relief was nice while it lasted.

He reaches out as if on instinct, a sturdy hand gripping Will's forearm. He's talking the moment they touch, fretting over him the way only Hannibal ever has. Will lets the flood of questions wash over him, waiting for his sudden dizziness to pass. "What happened? Come, get in the car, I'll bring you home. You told me this wasn't serious!"

"It's not," he bites, but he's grateful when he's able to collapse into the passenger's seat of Hannibal's Bentley. "I'm fine, it's fine. Let's just go."

Hannibal's about to close the door and make for the driver's side when Jack calls for Will once more. Will swears he sees Hannibal's hackles raise at the very sound of his voice. He's been hostile with Jack ever since the Jeweler. Usually it just inspires some fond exasperation on Will's part, but today he suddenly wishes that Hannibal could be there to make him back off more often.

Fearless, he places himself between Will and Jack. Will can perfectly conjure the image of Hannibal's sardonic smile behind closed eyes when he says "I believe Will is finished here, Agent Crawford."

Jack doesn't speak right away. Will tips his head back, trying to make himself some form of comfortable. Already, he's fantasizing about Hannibal's absolute continent of a bed. The safety, the scent, the silence. Hannibal's bedroom is becoming like a sanctuary to him − somewhere he can hide from the big, cold world, at least for a little while.

"I just need to speak with him for a moment − "

"Whatever it is can wait, I think," Hannibal interrupts, and his tone is one of cold dismissal. Will almost laughs. It's rare that Hannibal lets it slip just how little he respects Jack, but whatever favor he'd curried with Hannibal is evidently running dry.

It's a deeper relief than he'd expected, when Hannibal shuts the car door and begins to drive away. Without a word, he takes Will's hand in his own, rubbing soothing circles near the joint of his thumb.

Will can feel the other man's anger, rising like steam from his skin. It's fierce, territorial. Protective. Will melts into the seat. The world keeps swaying around him, but Hannibal keeps him steady.

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"Penny for your thoughts."

Hannibal sighs through his nose, frowning hard at the needle passing through Will's flesh. It hurts. It's miles better than it would have been at a hospital, though. It's a minor procedure, but Hannibal approaches it with tremendous gravity. He's precise, delicate but unflinching. He reminds Will of a sculptor, deeply engrossed as his vision takes shape before him.

It's nearly sickening, at times. Confronting Hannibal's affection, his attention. It feels perverse to be on the receiving end of so much interest. Gluttonous to the point of obscenity. His instincts want to shy away. He doesn't.

Hannibal tugs at the thread, pulling it taut. His focus doesn't waver, his words are violent, stabbing things.

"I'm going to kill that man."

A smile twitches at the corner of Will's mouth. "I'll help you get away with it," he quips dryly, and Hannibal's expression changes for the first time since they first walked through the front door. He grins.

"Don't make promises you aren't prepared to keep, darling."

Hannibal ties a surgeon's knot near the now-closed wound, snipping the excess thread. His touch lingers when the task is complete, his fingertips ghosting over the tender flesh of Will's side. Will twitches, more from the intimacy than the pain.

There's something almost wistful in Hannibal's face. Will wonders if he's longing to care for him more, or to open him up again. He imagines both parts of the process have their appeal, almost to the point of becoming cyclical. To be given a glimpse of Will's flesh − the red, weeping, fragile *beneath* of him − and then close it away again, safe and sound, like a secret shared between them.

Will lies there on the bed, sprawled out and half-dressed like a dying saint in a Renaissance painting, studying Hannibal. He's coiled tight enough to snap.

"Are you planning to exact your fury on the perp, or Jack?"

Hannibal doesn't reply. Again, his fingers trace the jagged line of Will's injury.

"Because Jack isn't the one who stabbed me, you know."

"He's as guilty as the man who did," he mutters, lip curling with distaste. "He's careless with you."

Will rolls his eyes. "Come here."

Hannibal doesn't relax, but he follows the order. Carefully, he moves to hover over Will's body. Will looks up at him, reaching out cup the side of his face. "I'm alright, Han. It wasn't that bad."

It doesn't soothe him. In fact, a look of deep concern passes over his features. When he speaks again, it's a whisper. "What do I need to do for you to start taking your own well-being seriously?"

He laughs, incredulous. The effort of the sound makes him have to swallow a groan. "It was one cut!" he argues. "I told you before, it looked − "

"Worse than it was," Hannibal finishes. "He could have killed you, Will. It's normal to be frightened."

Will's fingers move to card into Hannibal's hair when their lips meet. Hannibal braces his weight on one hand, mindful of his wound. The other ghosts along the length of Will's arm, making him shiver. His mouth travels, slowly, from Will's lips to his ear.

"You don't need to be strong for me. You know that by now, don't you?"

Will gasps at the feeling of hot breath against his ear, eyes closed and lips parted. "I know," he breathes, but he still struggles with this part from time to time. The needing it, the asking.

Hannibal kisses down his throat, caresses his chest. He's getting too good at his, as time goes on. Or Will is getting too good at letting it happen. He's already forgetting how to worry, how to fight, how to hide. He's slipping. He wants to. "It's okay, Will," Hannibal says, speaking the words into his collarbones. "You aren't alone. I have you. Let yourself rest."

It feels so good. Too good to ever dream of denying. If Hannibal wants to give him this, then so be it.

Hannibal seeks his lips again, kisses him slow and deep. Will's body sinks into the plush bed, his bones turn pleasantly limp.

"Let go."

Will sighs deeply, expelling every protest before they can take route. How many times has he had to convince himself that this is okay, that nothing bad is going to happen? How many times will he still have to convince himself before it becomes second nature? It's okay, he tells himself. It has always been okay.

"That's right," Hannibal purrs, and Will's face turns hot when he realizes he's spoken aloud. He's already drifting, already struggling to separate thoughts and words, what he wants to do and what he's *doing.* "Good boy, Will."

Those words. Will hums in contentment. Hannibal falls silent, but Will can feel the shape of his smile against his abdomen. It's dangerous, it really is. To have someone who knows exactly what he likes, and only aims to give it to him in abundance. He doesn't even make Will work for it, that's the worst part. All he ever has to do is *need,* and to need it from him alone. That's enough for Hannibal.

He takes his time. Lets Will soak in it. He luxuriates in every inch of Will's body with his eyes, his lips, his hands. Will can't even begin to guess how many minutes pass before Hannibal is working at Will's zipper. Long enough that when Hannibal says "Hips, please," Will obeys instantly.

It puts strain on his core, though, and Will is too deep to stop himself from hissing in pain. His hand moves to guard himself, the ache radiating from his wound outward.

Hannibal shushes him gently, tossing his pants and underwear aside before placing a hand on the center of Will's chest. He urges Will to lie back, and Will goes.

"It's alright, darling. Just relax."

"Hurts," Will grunts, and Hannibal kisses his jaw.

"I know it does," he coos. He brushes Will's curls back, kisses him again. "I know."

And then he's moving down, mouthing his way over Will's body until he's tantalizingly close to Will's cock. There's no point in pretending he isn't desperate, not when his dick is lying hard and flushed against his stomach. Will can't stop himself from arching closer, even through the pain.

Hannibal holds him down, hands on either side of Will's hips. "Easy," he murmurs, and Will swallows a whimper.

His legs spread eagerly when Hannibal guides them to, the muscles in his thighs tensing in anticipation. Yes, *yes.*

A pitiful sound of complaint slips past his throat when Hannibal moves to worship his thighs instead, bypassing his cock entirely. "Han," he whines, and Hannibal peers up at him, devilish, from between his legs.

"Just enjoy it, love," Hannibal replies, and runs his hands over the meat of Will's thighs. "Doesn't this feel nice?"

He lies back with a huff. It does. Hannibal's mouth on his cock would feel nicer, though. Might send him floating off into that space where he forgets how to talk, where the only thing that exists is Hannibal and pleasure. Will's hands curl into fists in the sheets. Hannibal sucks a mark into his right thigh, nips at the left. It does feel fucking nice.

Hannibal pulls away, and Will is too vulnerable not to reach for him. "Don't go," he pleads, and Hannibal takes his hand and presses a kiss to his knuckles before standing.

"Breathe, sweet boy."

The words help, but he doesn't actually start to relax until Hannibal reaches for his tie.

He's quick, when he undresses. He doesn't make a show out of it or make Will beg. Will squirms a bit when Hannibal is laid bare in front of him. He never gets used to the sight of him like this, all strong muscle and hard lines and dark hair. That thick, leaking cock has been the source of more intense pleasure than Will would've been able to imagine a matter of months ago, and fuck, he's so eager to take it again.

Hannibal doesn't return, though. Instead Will watches him move for the dresser. His heart starts pounding when Hannibal reaches for the third drawer, the one that's become full to bursting with toys and accessories in the time since their relationship had become official.

He rummages for a moment, then turns to face the bed. Will licks his lips, hands tugging impatiently at the sheets. Fuck, yes.

Will makes himself as welcoming as possible while Hannibal snatches the lube from his bedside drawer. He lies obediently against the pillows, knees bent and thighs spread wide. Hannibal smirks.

"You've had a difficult day," he notes, reclaiming his place between Will's legs. He pours the lube over his fingers, warming it as he speaks. "I think you deserve to be spoiled, don't you?"

Will bites his lip, stealing another anxious glance at the toy in Hannibal's hands. His curls bounce when he nods, forcing a shy grin.

He sighs blissfully when Hannibal brings two fingers to his hole, circling his rim. "Use your words, love."

Hannibal presses inside, and Will whimpers. Saying anything coherent right now, when his brain is quickly melting out of his skull, feels impossible. He can't seriously want Will to say *that,* can he?

His free hand rests on Will's thigh, a reassuring warmth that pins him to Earth. Hannibal thrusts slowly, his gaze flicking between the hole clinging to his fingers and the blissed out look taking over Will's face. He finds Will's prostate with practiced ease, teasing it and coaxing a high *"Fuck"* from his lips.

"Go on. Be a good boy and say it."

Just as quickly, Hannibal's fingers leave, and then he's spreading more lube onto the prostate massager in his hands. It's Will's favorite toy, it never fails to give him blinding, hands-free orgasms. His cock leaks onto his stomach, the sheer anticipation of it is enough to drive him mad.

He swallows, gathering all of his strength. Softly, halting, he mutters "I − I deserve this."

Hannibal's approving smile warms him all the way to his core. "Perfect," he praises, and Will's heart flutters.

Any embarrassment is blessedly short lived, executed by a combination of Hannibal's approval and the massager sliding into him. It settles perfectly against his prostate, and Will realizes that he's been holding his breath.

The moan that leaves him when Hannibal turns on the toy is sinful, low and drawn-out as his hand rises to thread into his own curls. The vibrations seem to ripple outwards, tingling over his entire nervous system until Will is nothing but a gasping puddle.

Hannibal resumes his earlier attentions, his mouth and hands playing over every inch of him. He doesn't touch Will's cock. Will doesn't ask him to.

Time starts to turn fuzzy, and Will lets himself get swept away on the current. His breaths turn heavier, the heat of his pleasure begins to take over. He's barely aware of how desperate he sounds, how he's whining and mewling for it. It feels like he's there, on the precipice, for longer than should be possible. Stretching out in every direction, with Hannibal at his center.

Fingertips nudge at his parted lips, and Will is too greedy for sensation to do anything but welcome them. He suckles at them, his tongue heavy in his mouth as he curls it around the digits. Above him, Hannibal groans.

The sound makes Will's lids flutter open, and he forces his glazed, unfocused eyes to take in the other man's face.

The sight of him has Will moaning around the fingers. Hannibal looks absolutely *ravenous,* his eyes dark where they're fixed on Will's body. Slowly, Hannibal forces his fingers deeper, pressing down on Will's tongue.

Will comes over his stomach, his cock jumping and his hips rolling instinctively. He throws his head back, calling wordlessly out to Hannibal as his orgasm crashes into him. Hannibal's hands return to his hips, holding him steadily before he bucks so hard that he hurts himself. His thighs shake, tremors shoot up his spine, it's euphoric.

It morphs into too much as soon as the peak of his pleasure backs off, but Hannibal doesn't touch the toy. Brows furrowing, Will whines in protest. He draws his knees together, though it won't actually protect him from the ongoing assault over his senses.

Will claws at the sheets, keening high. Every breath is a sharp gasp. The buzz of the massager has turned from perfect to ruthless in seconds, and Will is too far under to escape it.

"Han," he chokes. "H − ahn!" He's trembling from head to toe, trapped in a mind-numbing blur of pain and overstimulated pleasure.

When he forces his reeling mind to focus, he lets out a despairing moan. Hannibal is kneeling over him, his cock wet and shiny with excess precome as he watches Will fall to pieces. He always gets so *wet* for Will, it makes his mouth water.

"Give in," Hannibal breathes. His voice is rough, labored. A rush of pride joins the swirl of feelings at war in Will's gut. *He's* doing this to Hannibal. A bead of precome drips from the other man’s hand as it moves, and Will flinches when it lands on his flushed, quivering skin. "You're so beautiful like this, Will. Just let it take you."

Will's teeth sink into his lower lip. He tries to breathe, to unwind. To just lie back and accept everything that Hannibal wants to give.

He shuts his eyes. Falls against the pillows. Takes a shaky breath. His hairline is damp with sweat, his face burning with exertion. He licks his lips. Instead of concentrating on the oversensitivity, he seeks out the pleasure underneath. It's still there. Maybe it never left.

"Good. So, so good, for me."

This time when he mewls it's more sweet than strained. Before long he's chasing the stimulation, rather than hiding from it. He feels undone, greedy, his raw nerves soaking up anything and everything.

He's too far gone to even complain when Hannibal removes the toy. His body still tingles in its wake, begging for more. All he manages is a weak, questioning hum. Hannibal chuckles. "You'll get what you need, sweet thing," he promises, and that's enough to ease Will's mind.

Even as relaxed and prepared as he is, the feeling of Hannibal's cock breaching his hole still punches the breath from his lungs. Hannibal enters him smoothly, aided by the precome still leaking from him. Will wraps his arms loosely around Hannibal's neck, urging him closer. He longs for the closeness, the weight, the tacky warmth of skin on skin. Hannibal won't give it to him, he's too careful with Will to risk hurting him in his current state, but Will luxuriates in what he can get.

Hannibal fucks him deep, slow. His breaths are hot and humid where he bends close to mouth at Will's jaw. This. *This* is what Will needed. It's impossible to get lost in the whirlpool of his own thoughts like this, not with Hannibal so loving and alive wherever Will touches. He's never felt so liberated from his own worries as he does when the two of them are alone together. He imagines he never will.

His toes curl when Hannibal rears back and wraps a hand around Will's cock. Steady, thorough strokes, matching the thrusts of his hips. Will curses, his cock throbs as Hannibal swipes the pad of his thumb over the head. He's close again, and Hannibal knows it.

"Please," Will grunts. Hannibal's movements turn faster, he growls low in satisfaction. He never lasts long like this, having Will so pliant just *does* things to him. "O-Oh, God, please."

Hannibal lets out a throaty groan when he comes, lip twitching upward in a primal snarl. His thrusts become shallow, uncoordinated. There's a river of praises flowing from him as he fucks Will through it, a nonstop litany of *'Made for this. You feel so good, you perfect, perfect thing'* until Will feels tears stinging at his eyes.

It's the feeling of being filled that pushes him over the edge. He milks Hannibal's cock, coming so hard that his ears ring. He watches with dazed eyes as his release covers the other man's hand, his chest heaving with the effort. A few hot tears roll down his cheeks, and his lashes flutter wildly in a vain attempt to clear his swimming vision.

This time, he's allowed the comedown. Hannibal's forehead falls against his own, the two of them trading breaths for long, silent moments. It's a pleasant kind of silence. Hannibal once told him that he liked how quiet Will got when he was in Subspace. Will, for his part, likes how quiet the world gets. He stares at Hannibal, his features obscured by their closeness, and smiles.

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Will drifts for a while, after that, and Hannibal lets him. Things happen around him, but Will can't assign any real continuity to them. Hannibal cleans him gently with a soft cloth. He

offers Will cool water, bids him to drink. He sits beside Will, peels an orange. They share it slice by slice.

The first words he says when he returns to himself are "You never struck me as the sort of person who would eat in bed."

Hannibal smiles, separating a segment of fruit from its brothers and bringing it to Will's lips. "I wasn't, before," he replies.

Will lifts a brow. "I'm getting special treatment?" he prods. He takes the slice between his teeth. It's vibrant, sweet.

"Always."

Hannibal's attention drifts to the freshly stitched line on Will's side. After a moment, he adds "And I'd rather you eat in bed than have to walk about the house, for the time being."

His answering sigh is caught somewhere between loving and exasperated. "Han, I really am fine. I promise. You don't need to worry about me so much."

Hannibal's brows draw together, his thumb just ghosting in a circle around the wound. "I don't choose to feel this way," he confesses, and his voice is more delicate than Will is used to hearing. "I just do."

Something swells in Will's chest, then. Something thick and sweet and strong. Will's never been the first to say 'I love you'. Never had the stomach for the rich, romantic moments. Suddenly it feels like the words are taking up space in his mouth, weighing down his tongue like cough drops. He wishes that Hannibal was still urging him to use his words.

"Hey," he starts. He's aiming for something casual, maybe. For something easy. For a *'Hey, you know that I love you, right?'*

Hannibal looks up at him, and what little confidence he'd mustered seems to evaporate. "Yes?"

Will swallows. Seizes his courage. "I..." He licks his lips, tastes lingering oranges.

"...I think I want to stay here, tonight," he says at last. "Is that okay?"

Something about the flicker in Hannibal's eyes tells him that he got the message, loud and clear. "Of course it's okay, Will," he replies, and it sounds like *'Hey, I love you too.'*

Will flashes a soft, crooked smile. He leans close, steals a kiss from Hannibal's lips.

He pulls away when he hears buzzing coming from his forgotten pants. "It's probably Jack," he mutters, and Hannibal's lip twitches, just so.

"Would you like me to answer it for you?"

Will laughs. "As much as I would love to hear you tell my boss to fuck off, I think I'd rather just let it go to voicemail."

"Perhaps you can be taught, after all," Hannibal observes with a grin, and he guides Will into another kiss while the call goes ignored.

End Notes

thanks again to madeofbees, arrnutsss, and all of my raindrops!!!

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